



Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care

MEDIA RELEASE: 17 September 2015

**2015 SNAICC NATIONAL CONFERENCE CALLS FOR NEW
FRAMEWORK FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE**

Perth, Western Australia: This week over one thousand people from around Australia gathered in Perth for the 6th National SNAICC conference.

Following three days of sharing, learning and planning among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, leading industry experts, policy makers, researchers, government representatives, other non-government organisations, a final list of resolutions have been agreed to provide better systems and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

As we gathered in Perth we heard over 100 presentations providing strong evidence that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander models of services and care are working across the diverse range of situations and places where our people live. Our communities and families have the capacity to care for our children; we have the knowledge and we have the skills to strengthen those families in stress and support child well-being.

The cultural strengths of communities and caregivers – both women and men – should be the basis upon which the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are ensured. It is time to respect and trust this knowledge, and work with our people and services to provide quality of life for our children.

These services should be delivered through a holistic, integrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led approach.

The removal of children from their families should be the option of last resort and if removed, the focus should be to reunite them with their families and communities.

The lack of respect for our culture and our knowledge is a major contributing factor to the over-representation of our children and young people in the child protection system. We are outraged by the discrimination still embedded in the system. And we despair that we are not being heard. We also despair that current funding models are not delivering what is needed on the ground.

WE URGENTLY CALL

For a COAG target for early intervention investment to address the under representation of our children in the early childhood education and care system and their over representation in the child protection system.

For all jurisdictions to establish independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mechanisms to monitor the exercise and enjoyment of our children's human rights, building on the example of the Victorian Aboriginal Children's Commissioner Andrew Jackomos.

For the Australian Government to quarantine a proportion of the Child Care Assistance Package for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led research to expand the evidence base for supporting child wellbeing and cultural continuity.

We commit to a national day of action in 2016 to raise awareness of child removals.

We endorse SNAICC as the national voice for our children and families and call for the implementation of this communiqué to keep kids safe in culture.

We are all too aware of the hurdles we face in giving our children a fair start. These resolutions give us a renewed collective vision of what must be done to rectify these faults and the required targets to make sure these measures are achieved and not forgotten.

/ENDS

For more information, or to arrange interviews, please contact:

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About SNAICC:

SNAICC is the national non-government peak body in Australia representing the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Founded in 1981, SNAICC was established to engage in activities that promote and accommodate a strong voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

Over the past 30 years SNAICC's efforts have resulted in many key milestones and achievements both in policy developments at state, territory and federal levels and in developing innovative and useful resources for the sector.

SNAICC is governed by an influential National Executive made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled children and families' service